

TORPOINT
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
AND
Surveyor.

1913.

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

D.P.H., M.R.C.S., Eng., L.R.C.P., Lond.
Medical Officer of Health.

ROLAND H. BEAUMONT,

Assoc. M. Inst. Cy.E.
Surveyor and Inspector.

:: :: TO THE :: ::

Torpoint Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for 1913.

(A) NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

The population, which at the Census of 1911 was 4,283, is estimated at 4,321 for 1913. The number of inhabited houses is 812, giving an average number of persons per house of 5·2. The population is employed almost entirely in the Navy or Dockyard. There is no hospital in the district, but Committees exist for affording help to those in the Three Towns from which the inhabitants of Torpoint derive benefit. The number of indoor paupers is 23, that of outdoor paupers 61, giving a total of 84. This total, calculating on the population as now estimated, is 1 in 53 or 19·4 per 1,000.

The area of the district is 1,324 acres, the bulk of the population living in the 300 acres which constitute the upper third of a triangle with the Lynher on one side, the St. John's Creek on the other, the base forming part of the boundary of the St. Germans Rural District.

Steady progress is being made by the Urban Council in the making of roads as set forth in the report of the Surveyor.

(B) SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

Water Supply. The growth of the town from 2,400 to 4,321, which took place principally some eight or ten years ago, presents to the Council the question of water supply to be solved, especially as the new houses have been erected up the hill to the level of the clear water chamber.

The Council have at times considered various schemes which would increase the supply and pressure at a moderate cost, but they have been rejected after careful enquiry by the Council or by the Local Government Board.

The year 1916 is however now nearer, when the loans on the original scheme will have been paid off; the Council are again considering the possibility of settling the question by the finding of a supply which will be all that can be desired, both for its abundance and its purity, and which will meet the demands of any likely future growth.

Unfortunately, the present supply at Craffthole has been endangered by the drainage of the village of Craffthole, which stands on the brow of one side of the catchment area of the Craffthole reservoir. In this village each house had formerly its own cesspit, it was seen, however, that the washing-water from the village found its way down the lane towards the reservoir. Complaints were sent by the Torpoint Urban District Council to the St. Germans Rural District Council relative to this, and they, with the idea of lessening the nuisance, concentrated the drainage of the village into two tanks of fenestrated brickwork; the overflow from these gravitates towards the head of the reservoir, and thus the liability to pollution has been much increased.

The St. Germans Rural District Council are now considering a plan for the remedying of this by treating the sewage and conducting it past the reservoir.

With regard to the pressure, this is so low that in the upper part of the town it takes half an hour to fill a bucket with water, and the flush tanks are only filled twice in 24 hours.

There has been no curtailment of the general supply during the year, and the report of the Clinical Research Society on its chemical constituents is as follows:—

			Parts per 100,000		Grains per Gallon	
Total Solids (dried at 120° C.)	...	...	35·4	...	24·8	
Combined Chlorine	...	...	5·60	...	3·92	
Equivalent to Na. Cl.	...	...	9·24	...	6·47	
Nitric Nitrogen	...	...	0·38	...	0·27	
Nitrous Nitrogen	...	...	nil	...	nil	
Ammoniacal Nitrogen	...	...	0·0005	...	0·0004	
Albumenoid Nitrogen	...	...	0·0040	...	0·0028	
Oxygen absorbed in 4 hours at 27° C.	...	...	0·028	...	0·020	
Lead or Copper	...	...	nil	...	nil	
Temporary hardness (equivalent to Ca. Co ³)	...	...	19·5	...	12·7	
Permanent hardness	...	...	2·8	...	2·0	
Total hardness ...	...	...	22·3	...	15·7	

“In our opinion these results show the sample to be of satisfactory organic purity and of moderate hardness.”

Rivers and Streams. The drainage is discharged into the Hamoaze, but owing to the great width of this and the proximity to the sea no nuisance is created.

Scavenging. This is done by a contractor, who engages to visit each house twice weekly. The refuse is deposited in a tip within the Urban District, but at a sufficient distance from inhabited houses.

The substitution of moveable ashbins with proper coverings for make-shift boxes or fixed receptacles is taking place slowly. The Urban Council do not at present act upon the advice of their Sanitary Officers and enforce it. I am glad, however, to notice a growing opinion of the advisability of doing so in all cases, both for the health of the inhabitants and the convenience of scavenging.

Drainage and Sewerage. Most of the sewers were laid down in 1886, the system being extended from time to time to meet the growth of the town.

The drains have been relaid during the year at the back of Wellington Street, Waterloo Street, and Cambridge Terrace; also a storm water overflow sewer was laid in Ferry Street. The outfall at Muxey Rock is unsatisfactory and is to be relaid.

Some few years ago I advised the erection of vent shafts on account of the complaints about the road man-hole covers. One only of these have been objected to, namely, the one near Greenbank, which was erected on account of the complaints of former residents of Rock House.

In consequence of a complaint by residents, which was sent to the Local Government Board, a special report was asked for. In reply to this report no objection to the shaft was received by the Urban Council from the Local Government Board.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF DISTRICT.

(a) The number of inspections made by the Surveyor during the year was approximately 500.

(b) The number of notices served during the year was 42 formal, 20 informal.

(c) The result of the services of such notices was the abatement of nuisances in 46 cases, the others are pending.

PREMISES AND OCCUPATIONS WHICH CAN BE CONTROLLED BY BYE-LAWS OR REGULATIONS.

The slaughter houses (2) are well kept. There are only three houses with underground rooms, in one of which the room is not used as a living room. In no case are the rooms used for sleeping as referred to in the Housing and Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909. Section 17 (7).

Schools. The County Education Authority have decided to close the combined Boys' and Girls' departments of the Wesleyan Schools on account of their being cramped and inconvenient. The new Infants' School buildings will still be used.

The Council Schools have been visited many times and are satisfactory, except for the condition of the playground in bad weather.

The Wesleyan Infants' School was closed for three weeks in February for Epidemic Roseola, and also in April for Measles. The County Council Girls' School was closed in July on account of some 30 to 40 cases of scabies, mostly slight.

Milk Supply The milk supply of the district is sufficient and good. There are 8 milkshops subject to inspection, several of these draw their supplies from outside the district. There are 4 sets of cow-sheds, all of which are well kept.

Under the present system the Sanitary Authorities receive no notice of contagious diseases of cattle, or of samples of food taken for analysis, these duties being entrusted to the Police. There should be a closer association between them and the Sanitary Authorities in matters of public health. It is desirable that the Medical Officer of Health should be informed of the presence of contagious diseases in animals, and of any adulteration of food.

Housing. Inspections under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, have been made monthly by the Surveyor and the Medical Officer jointly, with the following results:—

The number of dwelling-houses inspected under and for the purposes of Section 17 of the Act of 1909	104
---	-----

The number of dwelling-houses which on inspection were considered to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	8
--	---

The number of representations made to the local authority with a view to the making of closing orders	8
---	---

The number of closing orders made	7
-----------------------------------	---

The number of dwelling-houses the defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders	63
---	----

The number of dwelling-houses which, after the making of closing orders, were put into a fit state for human habitation	4
---	---

The general character of the defects found to exist were obsolete traps in the yards, w.c's. out of repair, sash windows of which the bottom halves only were made to open, and dampness.

The inspection of the older part of the town, together with some of the newer streets in which defects were most likely to exist, is now completed. It is proposed to gradually reinspect the houses in the older area.

The number of new houses, which was only 2 in 1912, fell to 1 in 1913. In common with other districts, the activity in the building trade of a few years since has ceased.

Houses will let readily, at times there has not been one to let in the district, but during the last few years there has been a difficulty in selling, and hence little encouragement to build.

While there is at present no actual shortage of houses, this will obviously be felt in the course of a few years with the natural increase of the population, unless confidence is restored in house property as an investment.

Workshops. The number of registered workshops on the register at the end of the year was 17.

Two lists containing the names of four persons were received as those of out-workers living in the district, they were engaged in the making of wearing apparel.

The number of inspections of workshops was 20, in one case a defect of want of cleanliness was found and was remedied.

(C) SANITARY ADMINISTRATION OF THE DISTRICT.

1. **Staff:** The Surveyor (Mr. R. H. Beaumont, A.M.I.C.E.) is also Sanitary Inspector and Inspecting Officer under Article II. of the Housing Regulations, 1910. The district, in its present transition stage from that of a rural to an urban one, is particularly fortunate in having a Surveyor of such marked ability and one whose advice is so well received by the Council.

2. Hospital accommodation available for infectious diseases—none is provided in the district. While there is a necessity for it on account of such a large proportion of the houses being let to more than one family, the proposed grouping of districts for tuberculosis purposes will, it is hoped, throw light on the best grouping for this purpose also, and it will be well to await this.

3. The following adoptive Acts are in force in the district:—

“Public Health Acts Amendment Act,” 1890.

“Public Health Acts Amendment Act,” 1907, all except Secs. 39, 42, 67, and Part vi.

“Infectious Diseases Prevention Act.”

Bye-laws and Regulations are in force for the following:—

Prevention of Nuisances.

Common Lodging Houses.

Houses Let in Lodgings.

New Streets and Buildings (P.H. Act, 1875).

New Streets and Buildings (P.H. Amendment Act, 1890).

Slaughter Houses.

Pleasure Grounds.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

4. The chemical and bacteriological work is carried out by the Clinical Research Society, to whom specimens are sent by the medical practitioners of the district, copies of the reports being sent both to them and the Medical Officer of Health.

Specimens may be sent at the expense of the Urban District for the detection of diphtheria, typhoid, and tuberculosis.

(D) PREVELANCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, ACUTE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The number of notifications received was 28, of these 15 were scarlet fever, 8 diphtheria, 3 enteric fever, 1 erysipelas, and 1 poliomyelitis. Of those affected 16 were of school age, 5 to 15 years, and 6 below that age.

Two of the three cases of enteric fever were not contracted within the district, one was that of a young man in the Navy, the other was brought to the Workhouse from another district for treatment. The third was due to eating cockles gathered from a contaminated ground.

Of the 8 cases of diphtheria, 3 were in one house where the drainage was found to be defective; 1 was imported; in 1 case the house was very damp.

The 14 cases of scarlet fever which have occurred throughout the year have been very difficult to trace owing to the free communication between Torpoint and the neighbouring large towns where it has been prevalent; there was no connection between the different cases in respect of exact locality, attendance at day or Sunday school, milk supply, or any other common cause.

The figures as compared with those of England and Wales are as follows:—

TORPOINT.			ENGLAND & WALES.		
Number of Cases.			Per 1,000 of the population.		
Scarlet Fever	15	...	3·41	...	3·57
Diphtheria	8	...	1·81	...	1·39
Enteric Fever	3	...	·68	...	·22
Erysipelas	1	...	·23	...	·63
Poliomyelitis	1	...	·23	...	·02

(E) PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, TUBERCULOSIS.

Of the 13 cases notified during the year, 9 were pulmonary, in the remaining 4 other parts were affected.

Three of the sufferers were sent to the Didworthy Sanatorium, and one was admitted to the Workhouse Infirmary.

The action taken by the Medical Officer on receipt of a notification is as follows:—

(a) A visit is made by him on the receipt of a primary notification.

(b) Subsequent visits are made, if they appear necessary on the first visit, or on that of the Tuberculosis Officer.

(c) No second case has occurred in the same house during the year, but observations are made as to this point.

(d) In cases which have been visited by the Tuberculosis Officer he has kindly furnished me with details of his visits.

(e) When rooms have been vacated by a person who is suffering from tuberculosis they are disinfected.

(F) INVESTIGATION OF OTHER DISEASES.

No disease has prevailed during the year which has caused for special investigation or enquiry.

(G) MEANS FOR PREVENTING MORTALITY IN CHILDREN AND IN INFANCY.

Nine deaths of infants were registered during the year; of these 2 were from diarrhœa, both of them between the ages of 3 and 6 months. Four infants died during the first week of life from congenital debility, and 2 others from the same cause before reaching the age of 3 months.

The infant mortality rate per 1,000 births is low, namely: 81.

The only midwives registered in the district have been those supplied by the Torpoint and Merifield District Nursing Association, whose work has been uniformly excellent.

(H) VITAL STATISTICS OF THE DISTRICT.

	Annual Rate per 1,000 Living.		Deaths under 1 year to 1,000 Births.	
	Births.	Deaths.		
Torpoint	25·6	12·9	...	81
England and Wales—	23·9	13·7	...	109
96 Great Towns, in- cluding London...	25·1	14·3	...	116
145 Smaller Towns ...	23·9	12·8	...	112
England and Wales, less the 241 Towns ...	22·2	13·1	...	96
London	24·8	14·2	...	104

The number of births, excluding 4 belonging to other districts and occurring in the Workhouse was 111, giving a birth rate of 25·6, as compared with 26·4 and 26·6, respectively, for the two previous years, of these 58 were male and 53 female. Of the 111 one was illegitimate. The birth rate, though decidedly lower than 10 years ago, is slightly higher than the average for the country.

The total of deaths registered in the district was 60, giving a death rate of 13·8; of these 9 were in the Workhouse, 4 being of residents and 5 of non-residents, transferred for statistical purposes to other districts; there was also one death of a resident registered outside the district and transferred to it, giving the nett number of deaths at all ages as 56, and the rate 12·9 per 1,000 living.

Of the causes of death, 8 were due to organic heart disease, 5 to pulmonary tuberculosis, and 3 to cancer.

I am, Sirs,

Your obedient Servant,

SYDNEY G. VINTER,

Medical Officer of Health.

———— TO THE ————

Chairmen and Members of the Standing Committees.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to report as follows with regard to the work carried out during the year by your various Committees :

Highways. Your Committee has again had a very busy year, and the results of their work has very considerably added to the appearance of the town and comfort of its inhabitants. The gradual re-surfacing of the carriage-ways and afterwards tarring the surfaces, together with the reconstruction of the pathways and the provision of proper surface drainage, has had a very beneficial effect upon our district roads, reducing the dust nuisance to a minimum, and making such roads of greater utility and strength. The adoption of asphalte pavings has been very much criticised, but the pleasing appearance of the paths and their comfort after the top black surface has disappeared

has had the effect of silencing the majority of the people who were opposed to this method of reconstruction. The streets dealt with in this manner during the year were :

Elliott Square, Rowe Street on both sides from the Square to Wellington and Harbour Streets, and on the left-hand side so far as the bottom of lane at back of North Hill Terrace ; Quarry Street from Rowe Street to Fore Street on both sides.

Your Committee again carried out extensive tar-spraying work including the main road from beyond Montpellier Terrace to Tamar Street, and the following district roads were treated in the same manner. Parts of Barossa, Salamanca, and Victoria Roads, Tamar Street, Waterloo, Wellington, and Cambridge Terraces, and the path through the allotment gardens. In connection with the grant made by the County Council for the improvement of Antony Road, a 9-in. surface-water drain was constructed from Albion Road end to the end of Grosvenor Terrace, and the necessary gullies provided and fixed. Similar 6-in. drains were laid at the end of The Crescent and Montpellier Terrace, and the remainder of the work for which the grant was made, viz.: The channelling of the proposed new footpath in front of Hillsbro, The Crescent, and Montpellier Terraces will be carried out when such pathwork is in hand. A further length of footpath was constructed on the southern side of Antony Road from Modder Road to Buller Road.

Your Committee requested the County Council to take steps to widen the main road from Big Field Gate to the top of Milestone Hill, but I regret to say that the scheme was not included in the estimates for the County Council for the year under review, but it is intended to make further application, in order to have this work carried out, and by this means to provide for the safe passage of

pedestrians—this piece of road being very narrow and without any footpath is extremely dangerous, now that the fast self-propelled traffic has increased so largely.

During the year the footpaths in Tamar Street, from Fore Street to King Street have been entirely reconstructed and the carriage-way properly drained. The added streets taken over by the Council has very materially added to the work of watering and scavenging, and it has been found necessary to purchase a new watercart for this purpose of an up-to-date pattern, which is doing its work much better than the old one. The question of the supply of water for this purpose is one that requires attention, as at the present time, the time taken in filling the cart prevents the watering of the area in anything like a proper manner.

The building trade has again been very slack, only one certificate having been issued against three last year. Plans were approved of 22 houses, 1 new street, and 6 sundry buildings, including an electrical generating station; the figures last year were 1 house and 6 sundries.

SANITARY AND HOUSING.

Your Committee has again had a busy year, and have continued the inspections under the "Housing and Town Planning Act." The defects are almost the same as enumerated last year, viz.: defective windows, w.c's., and drains; in this connection 104 houses were inspected, and of this number 89 were found to be defective in some particular, and notices were served; of this number 63 houses were put in order in whole or part. The Council made 7 closing orders, and after the closing orders were issued 4 houses were put in habitable condition.

During the year 75 houses were inspected for public health work; 42 formal notices were served and 20 informal, and in 64 cases the necessary work was carried out to abate nuisances. Of this number 31 w.c.'s. were supplied with flush tanks and new pans, and in 39 cases the defective drains of premises were reconstructed, and 7 after chokage. During the year 17 premises were disinfected, including the Council School.

The Committee have reconstructed the sewer from Fore Street up to rear of Trelawney Terrace, and the majority of the house-drains along the length of this sewer have been reconstructed. Two storm-water overflows have been constructed during the year, one from the Square at the bottom of Harvey Street and the other from the bottom of Quarry Street, both of which have considerably helped in avoiding flooding of the adjacent properties. Various complaints were made during the year as to the nuisance arising from the ventilating shaft near Rock Cottage, but the Local Government Board saw no reason to take action after complaints had been addressed to them on the matter.

WATER.

The latter part of the season under review has caused a good deal of anxiety owing to the late date at which the Crafhole springs broke. I am pleased to report again that a full supply was available throughout the year. The pumping at Crafhole was rather under the average. Another cause for anxiety was the state of the valley above the reservoir, arising from the village of Crafhole, and your Committee have made strong complaints to the adjoining Local Authority, with a result that I hope, in my next report to be able to say that the matter is satisfactorily cleared up.

Many complaints have arisen from the shortage of supply to the upper levels, and more particularly with regard to Tremayne

Terrace, where your Committee has fixed taps at the bottom of the gardens, with good results for general use, though of no use for sanitary fittings.

During the year 320 washers were fitted to consumers' taps. Night inspections resulted in several minor leakages being detected and afterwards made good, and six new connections were made to the mains during the year.

LIGHTING.

The lighting of the town has not presented any special features during the year, only ordinary work having been carried out. The question of Gas v. Electricity has been very much to the front, and the Council has agreed in future to adopt electricity as the street illuminant.

The question of Fire-calls has been finally settled by installing an electrical system of call-bells, each fireman and the horsekeeper being connected to the station, and the system would appear to be perfectly satisfactorily. I am pleased to say that no serious case of fire occurred during the year.

In conclusion, I beg to thank the Members of the Committees for their continued assistance, and also to the members of my staff for their loyalty in carrying out the various works.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

ROLAND H. BEAUMONT,

A.M.I.C.E., M. Inst. M. & Cy. E.

